

VERTIGO

123

F A B L E S

WILLINGHAM  
HA  
McMANUS

Jan '13  
suggested for  
mature readers  
verfigocomics.com

In those days it might not have been common for a Wolf of remarkable stature to have a conversation with a teacup-wearing turtle.

But it did happen at least once.

THE SMALL GREEN WOMAN ASSIGNS FATES?

THE HELL YOU SAY!

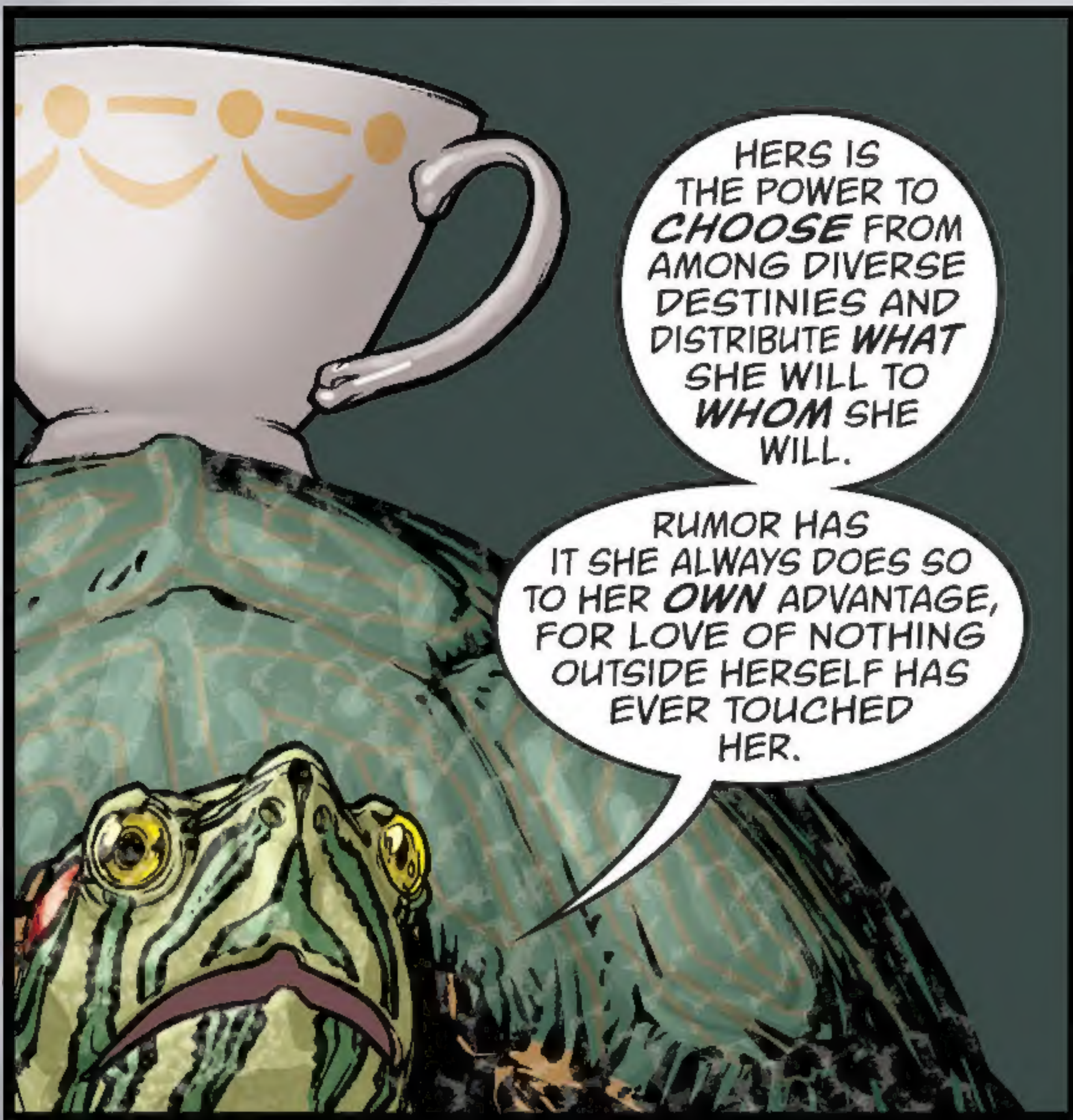
I'VE NEVER HEARD OF SUCH A THING!

IT'S AMAZING TO BE SURE, BUT TRUE.

# The Destiny Game

Part Two of Two

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HERS IS THE POWER TO **CHOOSE** FROM AMONG DIVERSE DESTINIES AND DISTRIBUTE **WHAT** SHE WILL TO **WHOM** SHE WILL.

RUMOR HAS IT SHE ALWAYS DOES SO TO HER **OWN** ADVANTAGE, FOR LOVE OF NOTHING OUTSIDE HERSELF HAS EVER TOUCHED HER.



HOW DOES SHE DO IT? HOW CAN SHE?

I'M NOT SURE, FOR I WAS **NEVER** AS GIFTED IN THE ELEGANT ARTS AS WAS MY FORMER HUSBAND.




I SUSPECT, IN PART, SHE'S SOMETHING OF A PERSONAL COURIER SERVING **THE FATES**, MAKING SURE THE MORE IMPORTANT DESTINIES GET DELIVERED TO THE CORRECT SUBJECTS.

SEVEN DESTINIES THIS TIME MERIT SPECIAL ATTENTION.

DELIVER THEM FAITHFULLY.

CHOOSE YOUR SUBJECTS CAREFULLY.


I WILL, AS ALWAYS, VENERABLE HOSTS.



THREE  
INVOKE CATAclysms  
OF WAR.

THREE  
INCITE ACTS  
OF MERCY THAT  
WILL CHANGE THE  
COURSE OF  
NATIONS.

THE  
REMAINING  
DESTINY BRINGS  
ABOUT A LOVE  
AFFAIR THAT WILL  
BE THE *RUIN* OF  
FOUR KING-  
DOMS.



PERHAPS  
SHE SKIMS OFF  
SOME OF THE REALLY  
GOOD ONES FOR  
HERSELF.

AH, WITH  
THIS ONE I CAN  
EXTRACT A DEAR  
*REWARD* FROM KING  
RAEDWALD, WHO  
WANTS SO MUCH FOR  
HIS NEWBORN  
DAUGHTER.



THEN AGAIN,  
HER ODD *ACTIONS*  
COULD BE PART OF  
THEIR INSCRUTABLE  
DESIGNS.

BUT I BELIEVE SHE ALSO STRIKES **BARGAINS** WITH THE VARIOUS LORDS AND LADIES OF SCYTHE AND HARROW, FOR MANY IN THIS LIFE DIE WITH THEIR DESTINIES UNFULFILLED.

WHAT HAPPENED HERE?

A GREAT BEAST SPILLED HIS **RAGE** OUT ON THESE FIELDS. THESE WARRIORS IN THEIR TENS AND IN THEIR HUNDREDS SOUGHT TO OPPOSE HIM.

THEY FAILED, BUT SOME DIED **WELL** IN THE STRUGGLE.

WE'RE CHOOSING THOSE TO BE ENLARGED IN THE LIFE TO FOLLOW.



THE BRAVEST WILL FEAST WITH US TONIGHT, IN THE GREAT HALL.

YOU KNOW WHY I'M HERE?

YES, WE WERE INSTRUCTED YOU HAVE LEAVE TO **PASS** AMONG THESE MEN, LIKE THE RAVENS DO, TO **PLUCK OUT** YOUR SCAVENGER'S MEAL.



NOT ENTIRELY ACCURATE, BUT CREDIT'S DUE FOR POETRY.

LET'S SEE. LET'S SEE.

OH, THIS BOY WOULD HAVE BECOME A GLASS BLOWER OF SOME NOTE, HAD HE LIVED.




SHE GATHERS THOSE UNSPENT FATES AND KEEPS THEM FROM WITHERING, BY **STORING** THEM IN SOMETHING SHE CALLS HER **CLASP**.



I CAN USE THAT.

AND THIS ONE WOULD'VE HANGED FOR A **THIEF** WITHIN A YEAR. ALWAYS GOOD TO HAVE AN EXTRA PUNISHMENT TO DOLE OUT. I'LL TAKE HIS FATE TOO.

AND THIS ONE--



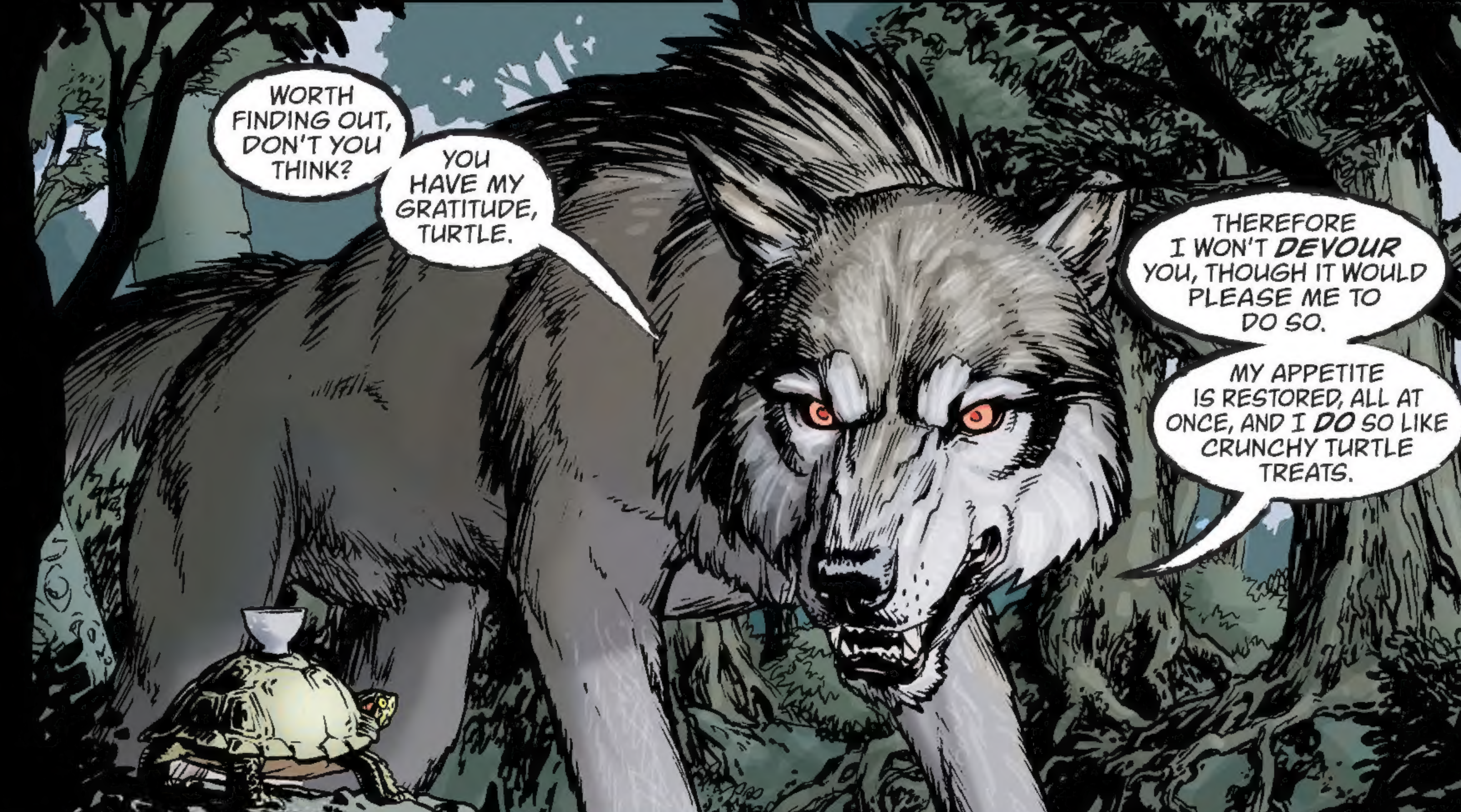
WHATEVER THE FACTS, THE UNDENIABLE TRUTH IS, HER POWERS ARE *PRESCRIPTIVE*, RATHER THAN *DESCRIPTIVE*.

SHE'S ABLE TO KEEP MANY DESTINIES AT A TIME AND *GIFT* THEM TO WHOM-SOEVER SHE PLEASES.



SO SHE CAN REMOVE THIS *DOOM* SHE'S PLACED ON ME?

WHO KNOWS? BUT IT WOULDN'T SURPRISE ME IF THE ONE WHO *PUT* IT THERE CAN TAKE IT AWAY AGAIN.

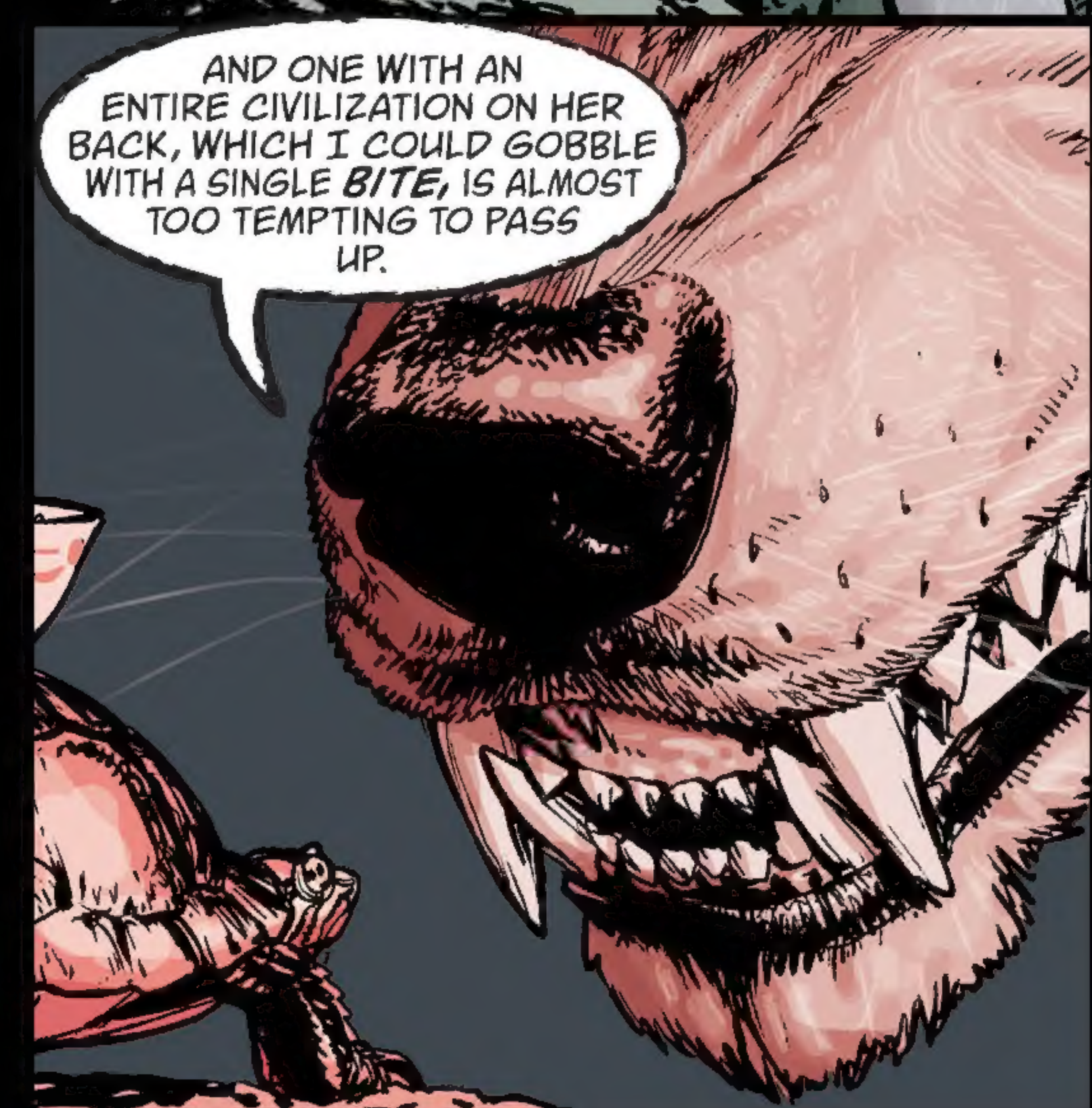


WORTH FINDING OUT, DON'T YOU THINK?

YOU HAVE MY GRATITUDE, TURTLE.

THEREFORE I WON'T *DEVOUR* YOU, THOUGH IT WOULD PLEASE ME TO DO SO.

MY APPETITE IS RESTORED, ALL AT ONCE, AND I *DO* SO LIKE CRUNCHY TURTLE TREATS.

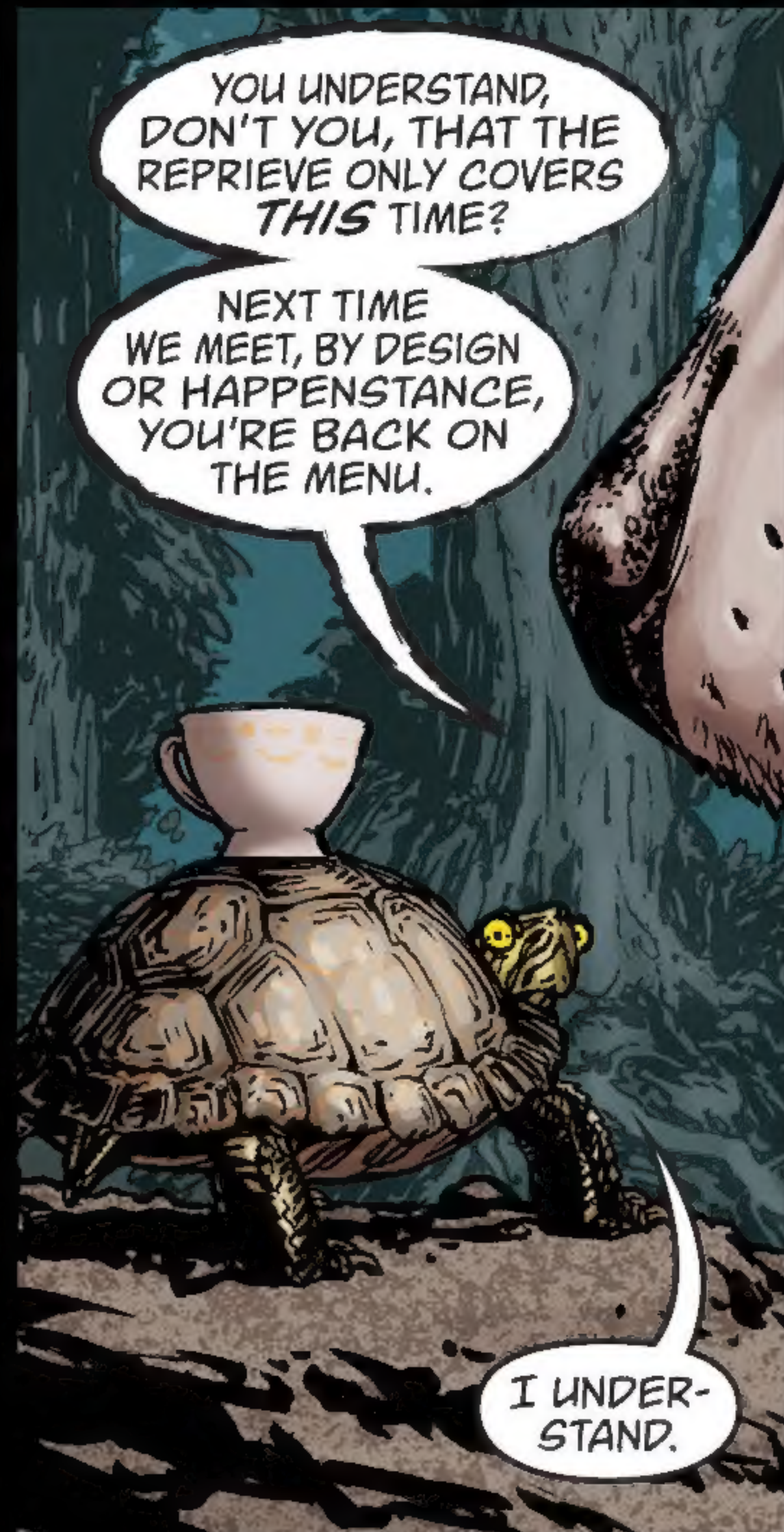


AND ONE WITH AN ENTIRE CIVILIZATION ON HER BACK, WHICH I COULD GOBBLE WITH A SINGLE *BITE*, IS ALMOST TOO TEMPTING TO PASS UP.



BUT, FOR GOOD OR ILL, I PAY MY DEBTS.

YOU'RE SAFE!



PHEW.

YOU UNDERSTAND, DON'T YOU, THAT THE REPRIEVE ONLY COVERS *THIS* TIME?

NEXT TIME WE MEET, BY DESIGN OR HAPPENSTANCE, YOU'RE BACK ON THE MENU.

I UNDERSTAND.

I AM THE **UNREPENTANT** LORD OF MONSTERS, AFTER ALL.

YES, I PICKED UP ON THAT.

GOOD.

AS LONG AS WE'RE CLEAR.



*In those days the Lord of Wolves could run swifter than any creature of the land—faster, in fact, than most things could fly.*

*He could run all out for thirty nights and thirty days without rest.*



*A simple dash of only one day and night was almost effortless.*



*On the third day after he discovered the place for the first time, the wolf was back outside the Green Woman's new stronghold.*





YOU!

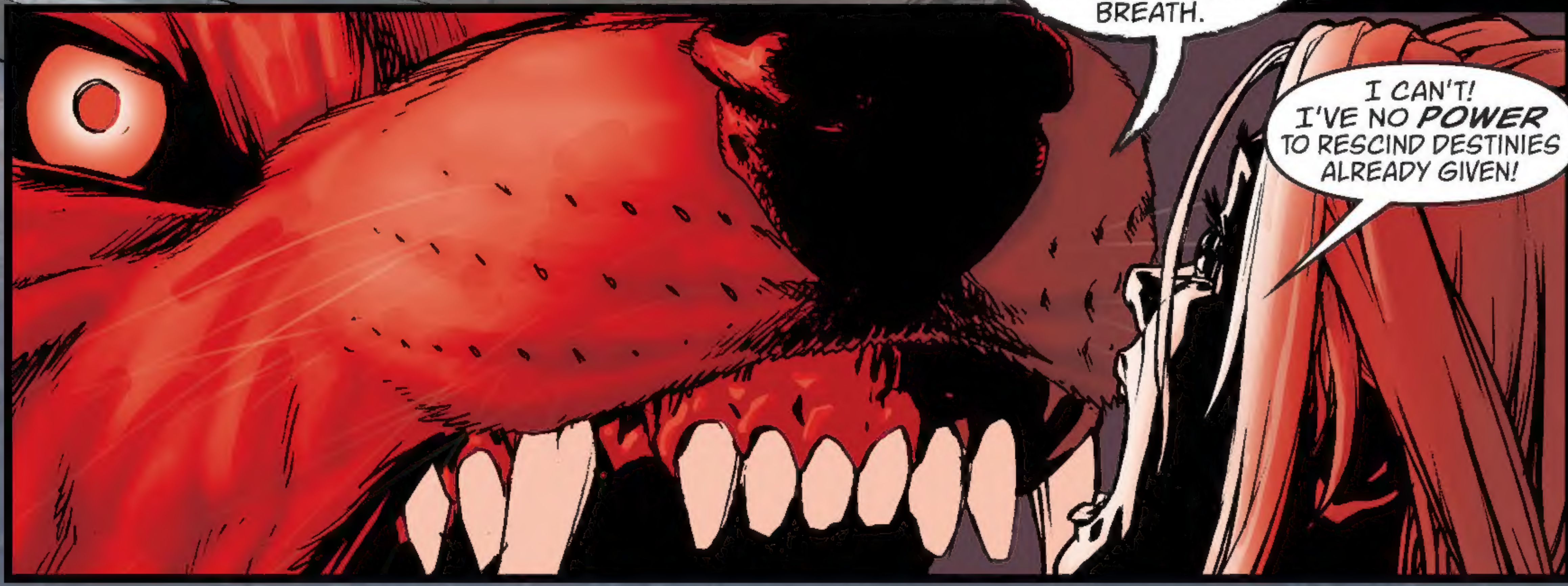
YOU?



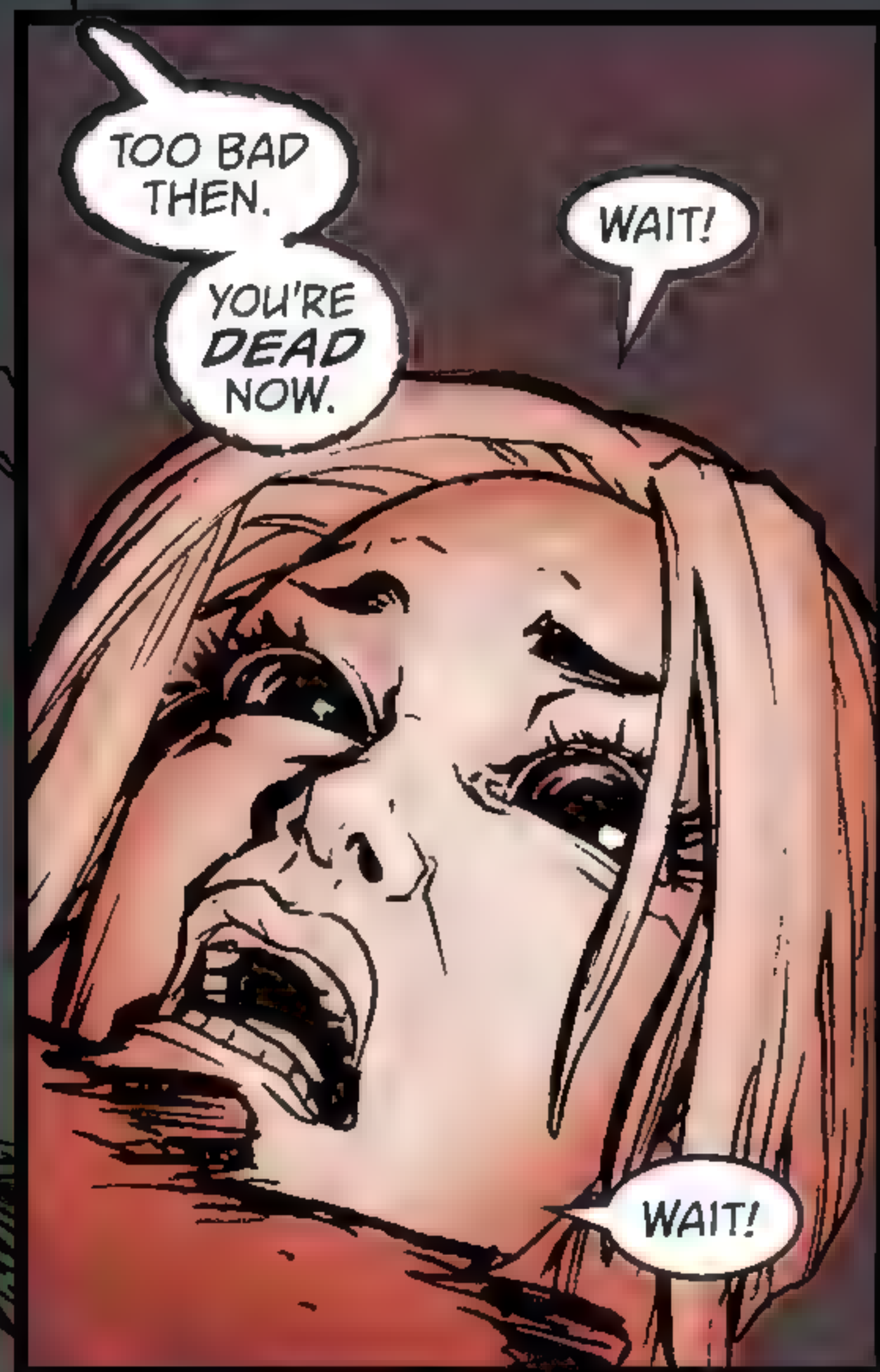
HELP!

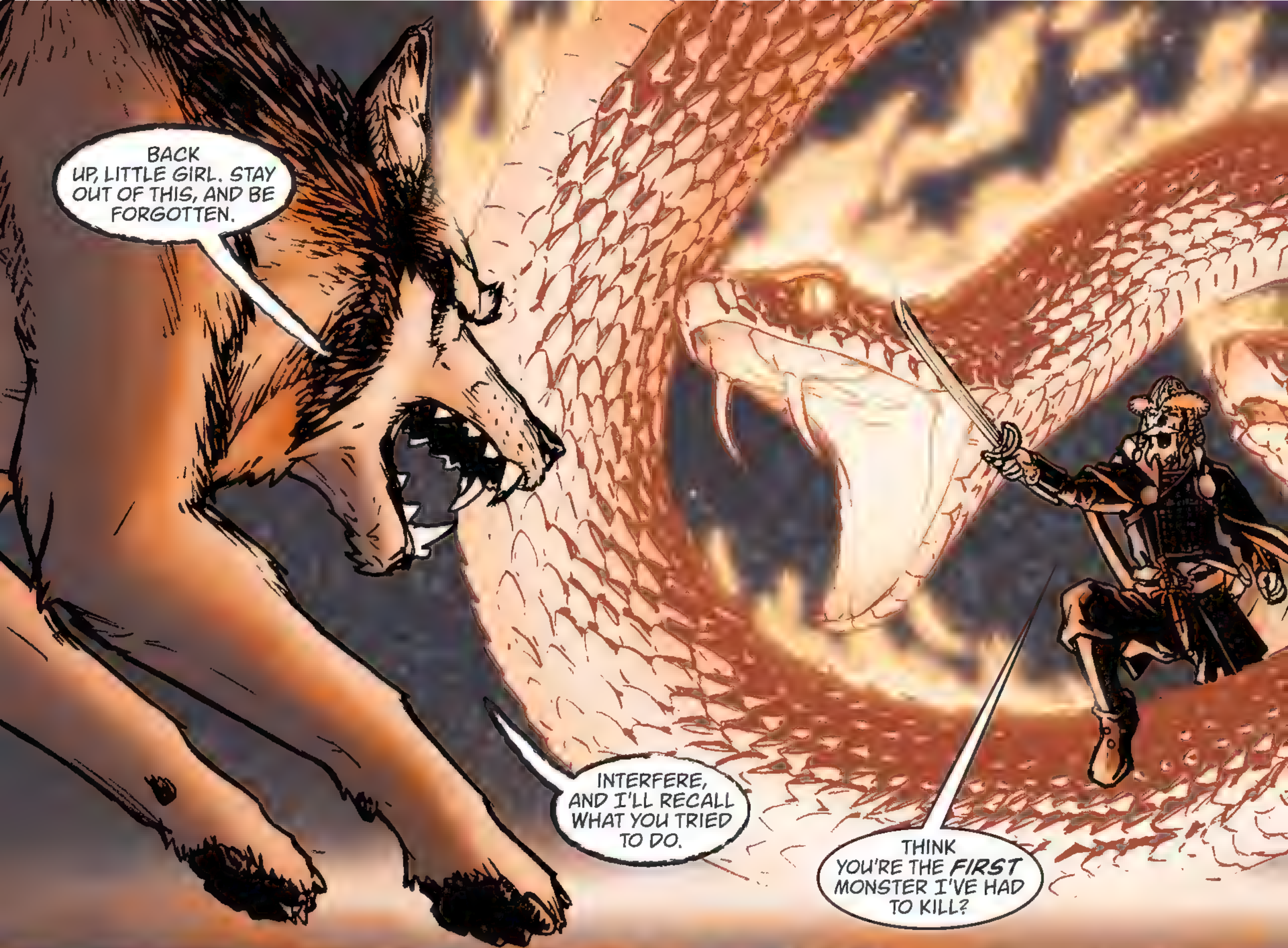
HELP, MAGUS! THE BEAST IS UPON ME!

ONE CHANCE, GIRL. UNDO MY FATE, OR I RIP YOUR FACE OFF WITH MY NEXT BREATH.



I CAN'T! I'VE NO POWER TO RESCIND DESTINIES ALREADY GIVEN!





BACK UP, LITTLE GIRL. STAY OUT OF THIS, AND BE FORGOTTEN.

INTERFERE, AND I'LL RECALL WHAT YOU TRIED TO DO.

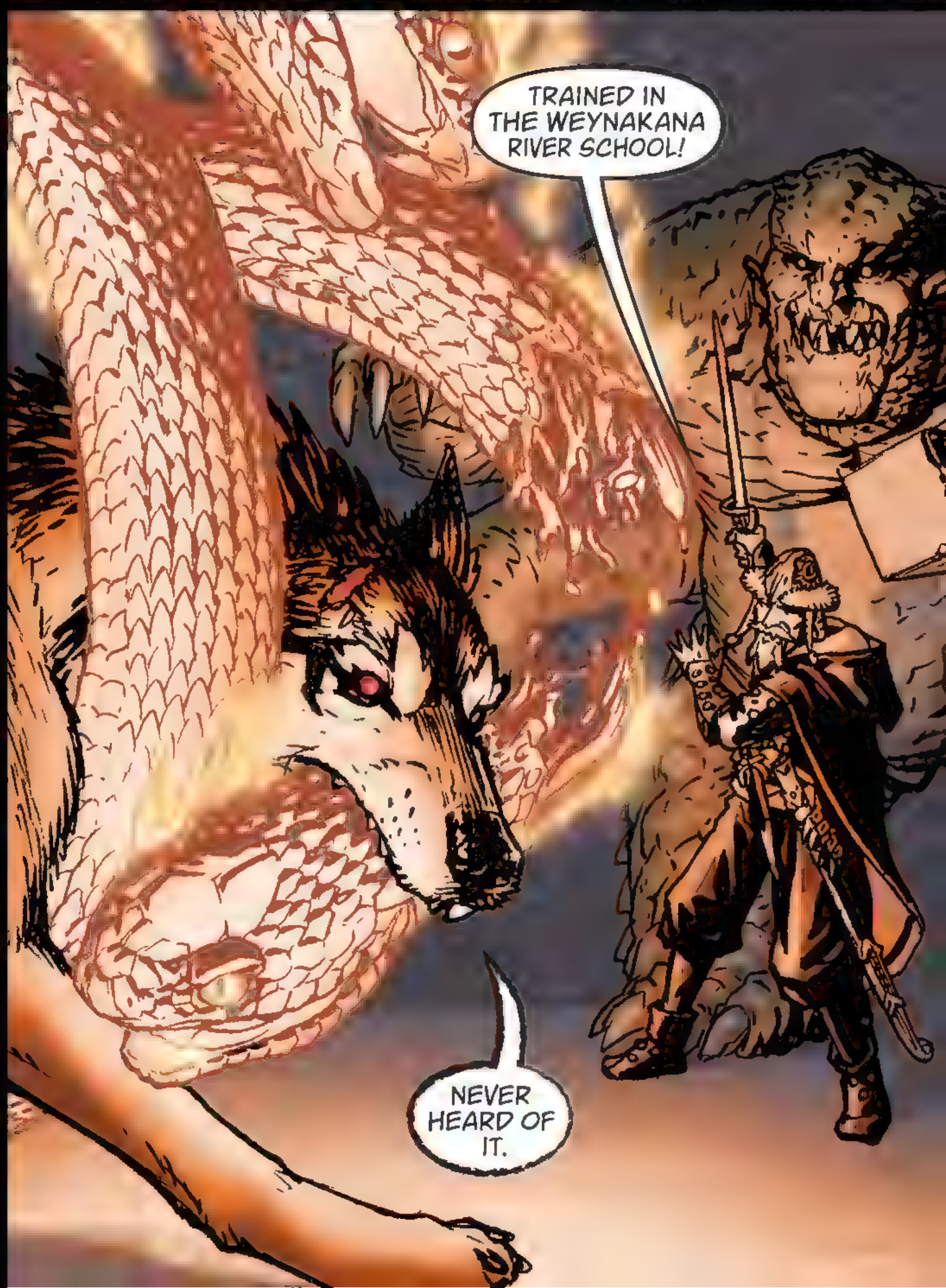
THINK YOU'RE THE *FIRST* MONSTER I'VE HAD TO KILL?



I'M NOT AN INSIPID LITTLE *GODDESS*, RIPE WITH ALL MANNER OF POWER TO MANIPULATE, INTERFERE AND MEDDLE, BUT ENTIRELY *UNFIT* TO DEFEND HERSELF.

I'M A *TRAINED KILLER*. A *COMBAT SORCERER* OF THE *FIRST ORDER*.

JOY.



TRAINED IN THE WEYNAKANA RIVER SCHOOL!

NEVER HEARD OF IT.



APPRENTICED TO ULMORE THE UNCANNY!

FAMILIAR NAME.



PRETTY SURE I KILLED AND **GUTTED** HIM TWO YEARS BACK.

DROGGED HIS STEAMING **ENTRAILS** AROUND THE BASE OF ALL SIX OF HIS INFAMOUS TOWERS OF BEDAZZLEMENT.



THAT WAS HIM, RIGHT?

SAME GUY?

*In those days the Great Wolf killed many monsters, summoned from distant worlds.*

IMPOSSIBLE!

WAIT YOUR TURN, BOY!

GET TO YOU NEXT.



The wolf was doomed to die in three days, ripped apart by a monster.



NO!



THIS WASN'T WHAT I WAS PROMISED!

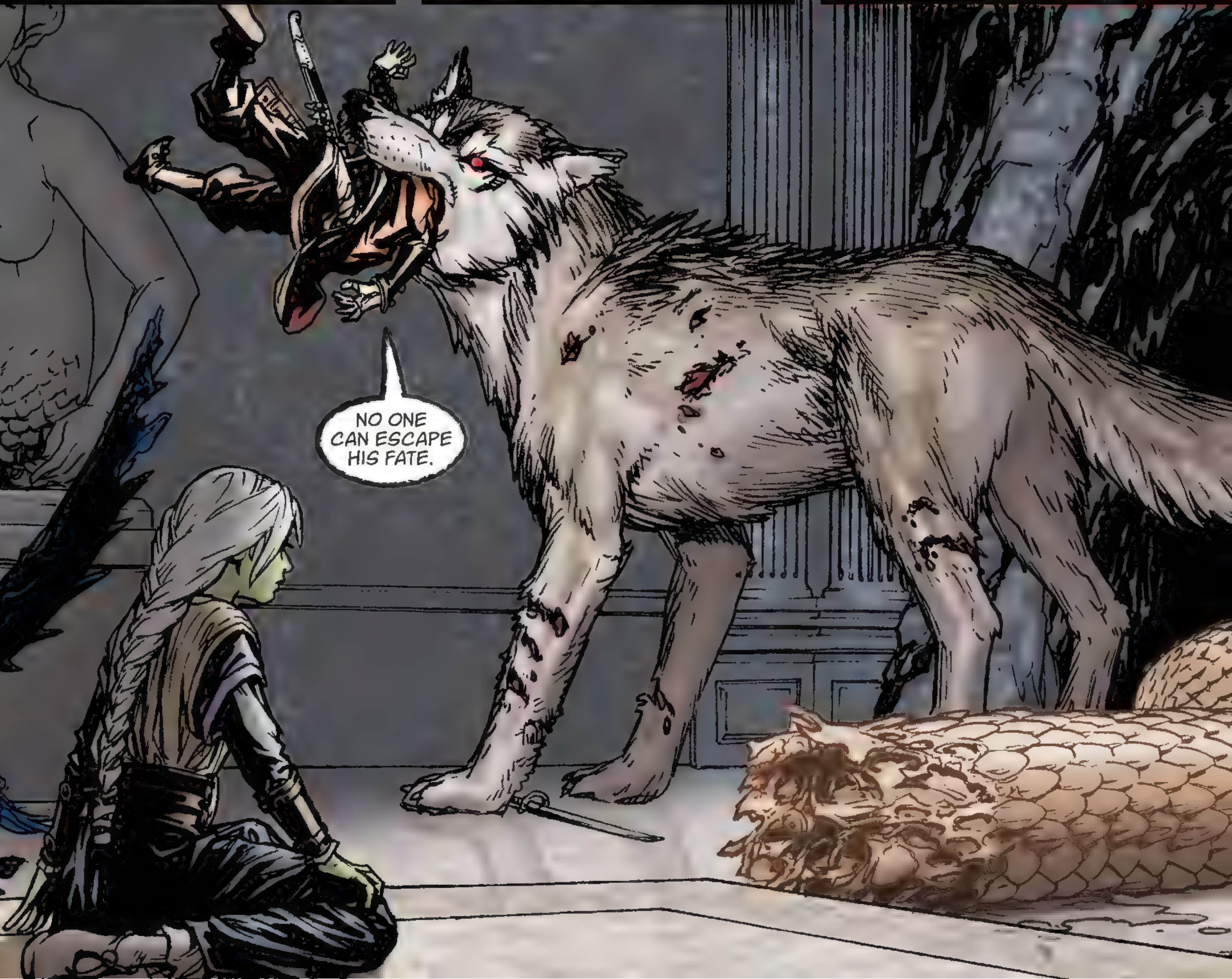
But on the third day, it was a great sorcerer who'd received that terrible fate.



It was Atlanter of the Castle of Illusions who was ripped apart by a beast exactly as big and bad as the wolf.

IT'S NOT FAIR!

TOO BAD.

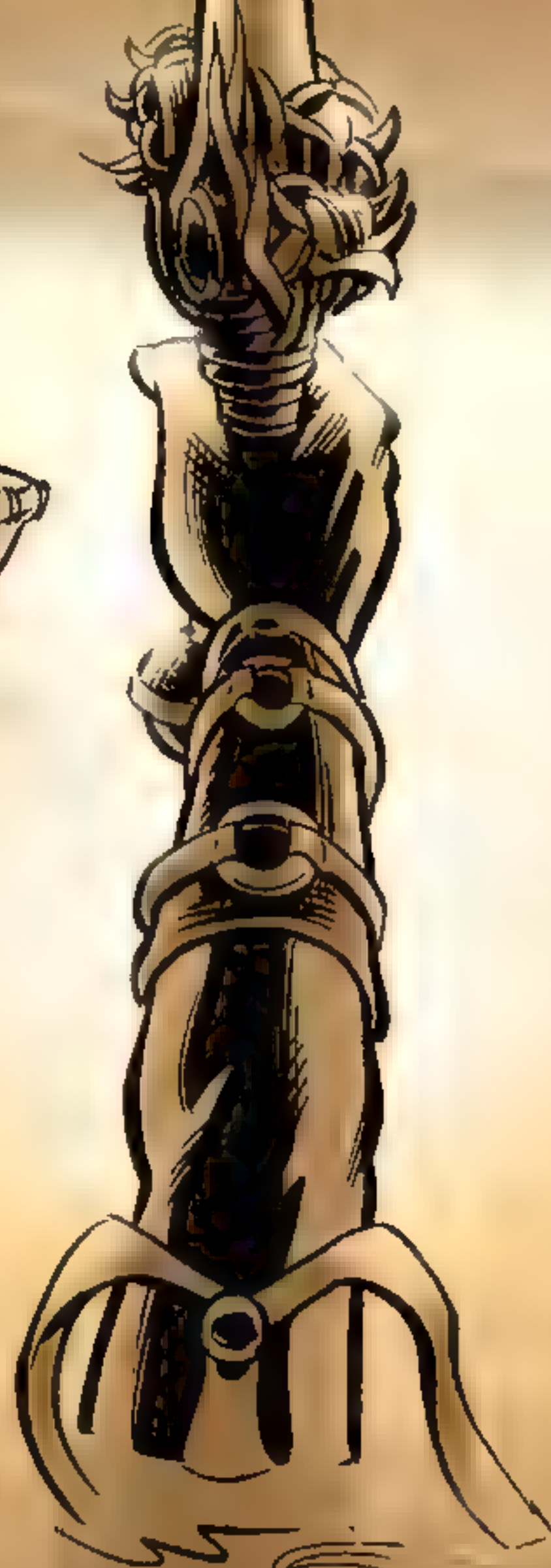


NO ONE CAN ESCAPE HIS FATE.

*In the ages to come the Green Woman of the Lake grew more dutiful in her fate-making. Less whimsical.*

*Perhaps her misadventure with the wolf and the sorcerer scared greater maturity into her.*

**TAKE UP EXCALIBUR, ARTHUR PENDRAGON, AND BECOME THE RIGHTFUL KING.**



*Many centuries would pass before she saw the wolf again, and that was a tumultuous day too, but perhaps a story for another time.*



*The wolf went on to live out the better fate he'd fought and killed to obtain that day, though he never knew the details ahead of him.*



*He learned the details of his life only as they occurred, and was content to live out his years that way.*





GET YOUR WRITING DONE?

ALL DONE.

I THINK I'LL GO SEE MY DAD TOMORROW.



GOOD IDEA. YOU TWO DON'T SPEAK AS OFTEN AS YOU SHOULD.

SPEAKING CAN BE OVERRATED. DONE READING?

basis for a system of government



YES. I'M DONE READING. YOU'RE DONE WRITING. WE'RE BOTH DONE *SPEAKING* FOR THE NIGHT. WHAT'S LEFT?

SCOOT OVER.

NEXT: A NEW STORYLINE BEGINS.

A REVOLUTION  
in  
**OZ**

Chapter Ten:  
**ENOUGH ROPE**

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assistant editor  
**Shelly Bond** editor

MEANWHILE...

WHERE IS EVERYONE?

WHERE HAVE YOU GONE?

HAVE YOU ALL DESERTED ME?

ATTEND ME, YOU POOPERS AND TURNCOATS!

ATTEND YOUR EMPEROR!

YES, SIR, Y'MAJESTY!

RIGHT AWAY, SIR!





UUUUUR-  
RRRGG...

YOU'RE  
NOT  
DEAD?



AFTER  
THAT FALL  
AND  
SNAP?

MY NECK'S  
MADE OF **STONE**,  
YOU NINCOMPOOP!  
OF COURSE I'M  
NOT DEAD!



FINE!

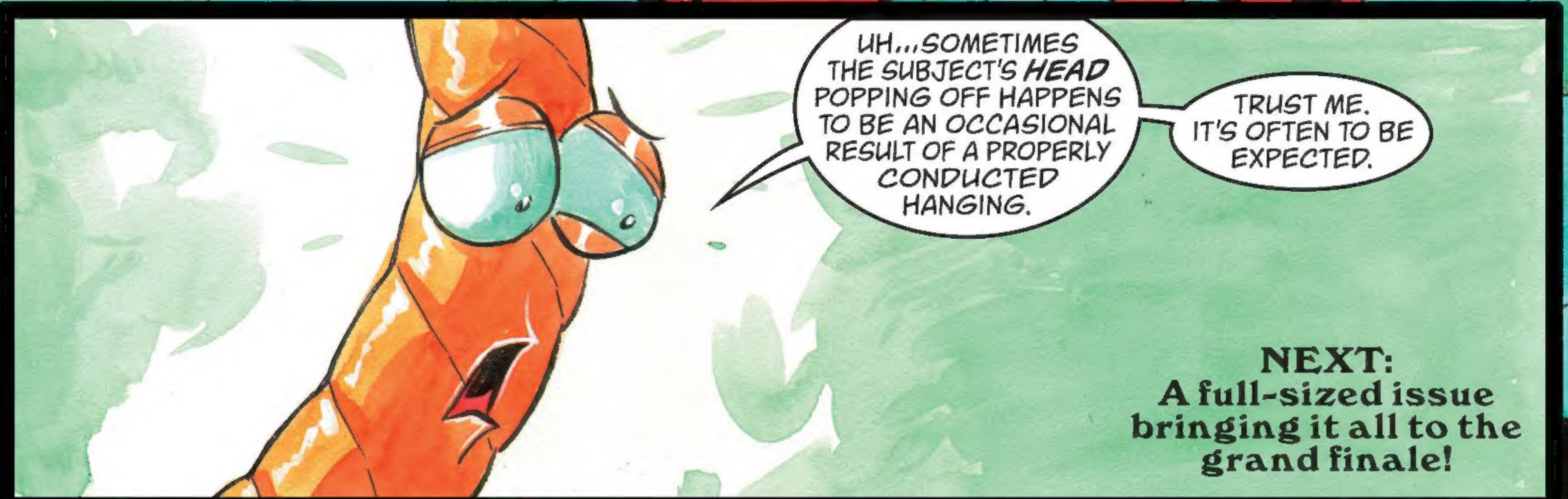
SO I'LL  
HAVE TO **TRY**  
A LITTLE HARDER!  
BUT HANGING'S MY  
PROFESSION, AND  
HANG YOU I  
WILL!



EVEN IF I  
HAVE TO **SNAP**  
YOU LIKE A  
WHIP!

OR...

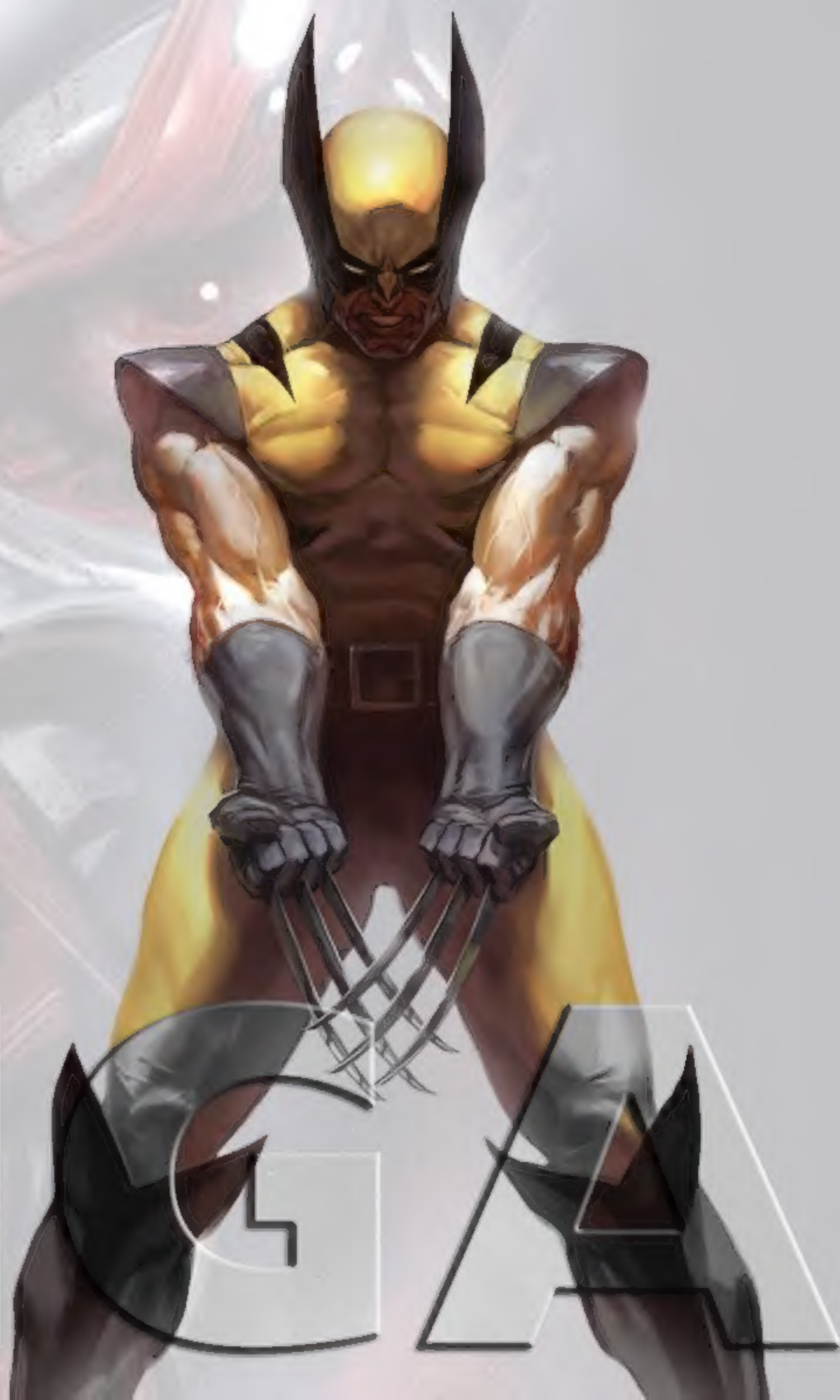
**POP!**



UH...SOMETIMES  
THE SUBJECT'S **HEAD**  
POPPING OFF HAPPENS  
TO BE AN OCCASIONAL  
RESULT OF A PROPERLY  
CONDUCTED  
HANGING.

TRUST ME.  
IT'S OFTEN TO BE  
EXPECTED.

**NEXT:**  
A full-sized issue  
bringing it all to the  
grand finale!



NATHAN